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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
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CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
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JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
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SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

Mideast

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz and Israel Radio reported that the US has renewed pressure on Israel to evacuate unauthorized outposts and to broaden efforts to help West Bank Palestinians in the run up to the Annapolis

meeting. Those media quoted National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley as saying during talks in Jerusalem late last week that the US expects Israel to take measures that will assist PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas. Hadley's message was that if Israel wants to delay the discussions on the core issues, it must help the Palestinians change the situation on the ground and evacuate the outposts. (Ha'aretz reported that on Monday and Tuesday Israeli forces evacuated and destroyed the homes of Jewish shepherds in an illegal outpost in the southern Hebron Hills) Ha'aretz said that Hadley also made it clear that the White House is fully behind Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, dismissing any notion that she

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is acting independently.

Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that on Tuesday in Cairo, Chairman Abbas called for a series of conferences. The newspaper quoted chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmed Qurei (Abu Ala) as saying that there is no point to talks in the absence of an Israeli commitment to a timeline. Citing AP, The Jerusalem Post quoted Abbas as saying that key Arab countries will attend the Annapolis meeting. Makor Rishon-Hatzofe reported that Palestinian television has resumed "incitement" broadcasts.

Ha'aretz quoted the Shin Bet as saying in an analysis to Israel's political leadership that the PA is demanding that Israel acknowledge the "Peres Letter," which accompanied the Oslo accords of 1993. The letter promises to allow Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem. Ha'aretz reported that in anticipation of Palestinian demands at Annapolis, the Shin Bet warned PM Ehud Olmert that he should not be recognize East Jerusalem as the future Palestinian capital, because it also includes the Old City and the Western Wall. According to Shin Bet analysts, there are concerns of a Palestinian "trick" during the negotiations, in which Israel will be tempted to offer recognition in principle of East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital, and delay discussion of the details including on the administration of the holy sites.

The Jerusalem Post reported that not a single kilometer of the West Bank security fence has been completed in the past four months. The newspaper reported that despite claims by the Defense Ministry of a lack of funds, the Prime Minister's Office says that 500 million shekels (around USD 125.7 million) remains allocated to the project in the Defense Ministry's coffers. The Jerusalem Post quoted both the Prime Minister's Office and the Defense Ministry as saying that they could not comment on the delay in the work of the South Hebron Hills portion of the fence.

Major media reported that on Tuesday Israeli troops attacked a Hamas police station in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip. Four Palestinians were killed.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Israeli defense officials as saying on Tuesday that despite Attorney General Menachem Mazuz's order to review energy-related sanctions on the Gaza Strip, Israel would soon begin cutting off electricity to Gaza. Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday the EU urged Israel to carefully reconsider how cutting energy supplies to the Gaza Strip will impact Palestinian civilians.

Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday Chinese PM Wen Jiabao told FM Tzipi Livni, who is on a visit to China, that his country is a full partner to the UN Security Council's sanctions on Iran. Ha'aretz reported that Livni told Jiabao: "Hesitation in [the Iranian nuclear issue] is looked upon by the Iranian regime as weakness, and the moderate states in the region will try to appease Iran instead of fighting it, in order to reduce the danger to themselves." Maariv reported that Livni told her Chinese hosts that a nuclear Iran might lead to a nuclear arms race in the Middle East. The Jerusalem Post reported that "Livni made no headway in China."

Leading media reported that on Tuesday Syria-based Palestinian officials announced that a Hamas-led meeting slated for early November in Damascus would be postponed to coincide with the Annapolis meeting. Ha'aretz quoted Palestinian sources as saying that the US will invite Syria to Annapolis if Damascus does not meddle in the Lebanese elections.

Leading media reported that on Tuesday up to 100 solidarity rallies for the three captive Israeli soldiers were held around the world. Ha'aretz reported that B'Tselem, The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, is about to open an office in Washington. The organization hopes this will improve its access to US politicians, decision makers, think tank members, journalists, and diplomats, as well as the American Jewish community.

All media reported that on Monday the Galilee village of Peki'in erupted into violent confrontations between police and residents, in scenes reminiscent of the October 2000 Arab-Israeli riots. The media reported that Druze and Israeli-Arab leaders have demanded that the police apologize for the violence and that a commission of inquiry be established.

Ha'aretz reported that Abir Atfah, the Cairo spokeswoman of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), told the daily that the UNHCR is investigating whether Egypt broke its promise not to deport Sudanese refugees back to their country of origin after they had illegally crossed into Israel. The investigation, which also involves Israel's Foreign Ministry, revolves around 48 Sudanese refugees whom Israel deported to Egypt two months ago.

Leading media cited the State Attorney's concern that the High Court of Justice may intervene in the affair of former president Moshe Katsav. The media said that Dorit Beinisch, the court's President, hurled sharp criticism at the plea bargain which omitted sexual charges.

Ha'aretz reported that a group of prominent Jewish American philanthropists has taken steps in recent weeks to separate the Jewish Agency from the World Zionist Organization (WZO) and end all political affiliation in the operation of the WZO. Donors and community leaders in the US are calling for increased transparency at the Jewish Agency, which is responsible for immigration from the Diaspora. Major media reported that on Tuesday Interior Minister Meir Sheetrit told Jewish Agency officials that Israel should not rush into granting automatic citizenship to every Jew.

The Jerusalem Post reported that Prof. Joseph Almog, a Hebrew University scientist, has invented a spray that can detect traces of explosives on bodies and belongings.

Mideast:

Summary:

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Israel [is likely to] be presented as a peace rejectionist versus the willingness for peace of the Palestinians, the Syrians, and all of the Arab states."

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "A shared fear of failure rather than hope for success is propelling the relevant parties toward Annapolis. That fear is multifaceted."

Conservative columnist Yosef Harif wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv: "As the Annapolis summit is getting closer, its principals -- the United States, Israel, and the Palestinians are showing signs of sobering up from exaggerated expectations."

Very liberal columnist Meron Benvenisti, deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978, wrote in Ha'aretz: "It is almost impossible to 'subtract' neighborhoods [from Jerusalem] without destroying the fabric of life in the city."

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "The PA has never really punished anyone for murdering or trying to kill an Israeli or for attacking Israel."

Block Quotes:

I. "Deluge in Annapolis"

Eytan Haber, veteran op-ed writer and assistant to the late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin, opined in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (10/31): "Of all of the people coming to Annapolis, only Olmert has something to sell, real merchandise -- territories. Despite extensive advance planning and preparations, Condi ... will surprise him with demands that will enable her and the United States, her country, to 'return home safely.' After Condi (and perhaps President Bush himself), the others, representatives of the countries that are responsible for world peace, will also try to explain to Olmert that he has no choice: He has to 'throw a bone,' give something. As things look presently -- and the emphasis is on the word 'presently' -- Olmert can sell the entire Land of Israel,

but he will have nowhere to return.... He will not have a government. People will try to explain to Olmert that Begin did not have a majority for the peace agreement with Egypt, that Rabin had trouble with his coalition, and that Sharon, Arik Sharon, pushed forward the Roadmap and disengagement with miniscule, even deficient, parliamentary support. Even after these explanations Olmert will not, apparently, be able to deliver the goods. And then, at this point, Israel will be presented as a peace rejectionist versus the willingness for peace of the Palestinians, the Syrians, and all of the Arab states."

II. "Summit of Fear"

Washington correspondent Shmuel Rosner wrote in the independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (10/31): "A shared fear of failure rather than hope for success is propelling the relevant parties toward Annapolis. That fear is multifaceted. Palestinian officials warn against a summit that would fail to meet the Palestinians' expectations, prompting Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas to resign. This would result in governmental chaos, the Palestinians warn. Israeli intelligence officials, meanwhile, warn of Hamas's penetration into the West Bank. Some Jordanians are worried that Hamas's presence there would cause the Hamas revolution to seep into the Hashemite Kingdom. Those and other concerns make up the jigsaw of American fears. Rice calls the sum of concerns 'context,' but in fact it's just another name for the old "linkage factor" - a theory that links the outcome of American mediation in the peace process to possible regional ramifications.... The American mediators have to address another inherent difficulty, a double fear factor. A recent Gallup poll revealed that 83 percent of Palestinians have little admiration for the American leadership.... One way of allaying the Palestinians' suspicions would be to opt for a real or simulated conflict with Israel. But that would only serve to create suspicion from the Israeli side. A recent survey by the [Israeli] Peace Index Project found that most Jews oppose allowing the US to act as the arbiter on which concession each party should make if the negotiations reach a stalemate. To cross that line, Rice will need President George W. Bush to reaffirm his backing."

III. "Signs of Sobering Up"

Conservative columnist Yosef Harif wrote in the popular, pluralist Maariv (10/31): "As the Annapolis summit is getting closer, its principals -- the United States, Israel, and the Palestinians are showing signs of sobering up from exaggerated expectations, as if the international meeting will advance the establishment of a Palestinian state, the moderate Arab states will recognize Israel, and [the meeting] will contribute to quiet and the stabilization of the United States' status in the region.... Israel has real existential demands which it will never give up. It faces a weak Palestinian Authority, which is unable to make concessions.... Despite her failure to bridge the gaps so far, Condoleezza Rice still believes that a common denominator can be found between the sides and that they can be brought to the Annapolis negotiation table, but it appears that even if the conference starts, the chances of a real diplomatic process are pretty scarce."

IV. "Who Cares about Where Shoafat Is?"

Very liberal columnist Meron Benvenisti, deputy mayor of Jerusalem from 1971 to 1978, wrote in Ha'aretz (10/31): "It is almost impossible to 'subtract' neighborhoods [from Jerusalem] without destroying the fabric of life in the city, and it is extremely difficult (and of course immoral) to retract social benefits previously granted. It turns out that the lack of consideration created the borders of the annexation, gave birth to unexpected results and actually led to the economic improvement of Arab Jerusalem. But perhaps it was not the thoughtlessness that led to this but rather the colonialist bravado; that those who drew the borders over the generations added and subtracted thousands of people without asking their opinions. To day they are 'inside' and tomorrow, when the fashion changes, they will be 'out.' This playing around with peoples' lives is the height of folly because anyone who wants to draw the future of the city must listen to the wishes of all its citizens, Jews and Arabs alike."

IV. "Rules of the Game, Palestinian-Style"

The Director of the Interdisciplinary Center's Global Research in International Affairs Center, columnist Barry Rubin, wrote in the conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (10/31): "The PA has never really punished anyone for murdering or trying to kill an Israeli or for attacking Israel.... Based on his own interests, Abbas should have shot [the alleged would-be assassins of Ehud Olmert], which is what the PA does to people it deems traitors. But they probably won't even get community service in the end. Why? Because of the rules of Palestinians politics.... [Those tenets are:] 1) Palestinians cannot stop other Palestinians from attacking Israel.... 2) He who is most militant is always right.... 3) More violence is good and a 'victory' if it inflicts casualties or damage on Israel.... 4) No Israeli government can do anything good.... 5) Since Palestinians are the perpetual victim they are entitled to everything they want and never need to give anything in exchange for Israeli concessions.... 6) Fatah won't discipline or expel anyone for launching attacks. 7) Wiping Israel off the map is morally correct.... 8) The movement sets as top priority the so-called 'right of return'.... 9) It is more important to be steadfast and patient with a terrible status quo than to make big gains by ending the conflict forever.... Even if a handful of Palestinians want to reach agreement with Israel, they cannot -- and even worse, dare not -- violate those commandments."

JONES